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The Basics of Extended School Year Services

All children who have a current IEP (Individualized Education Program) should be considered for extended school year services (ESY) by their IEP team. ESY services are provided to prevent the loss of the child's learning progress from the regular school year, a decision that is based on a review of existing information about the child and a prediction by the team as to whether that educational progress would be compromised by the absence of ESY services.

ESY focuses on critical learning skills that impact maintenance of educational benefit and loss of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Critical learning skills may include communication skills, self-help skills, social-emotional skills, and motor skills. Loss of a specific academic or functional skill may not qualify a student for ESY services unless it results in loss of meaningful educational benefit.

ESY services can be provided in a variety of forms and locations depending on the child's needs, including: the classroom setting, an intra-school cooperative program, a cooperative program with another agency, limited child contact (3-4 times during the summer to prevent regression), a week of intensive review prior to the start of the regular school year, multi-school shared programs, community-based programs, transition opportunities, and services provided by the parent in the home and supported by school personnel.

Children should be considered for ESY services at least annually, and no later than 45 days before the end of the regular school year. This decision must be documented on the IEP and a prior written notice (PWN) must be completed to notify parents as to whether or not their child has been determined eligible for ESY services.

According to the Arizona Department of Education, "Documentation of ESY services shall specify which goal(s) will be reinforced during ESY services...shall describe the type of services (such as direct instruction, specific related services, consultation, or supervision), the beginning date of services, the minutes per week of each service, and where the service will be provided." Children who qualify for ESY one year are not automatically eligible for ESY the next year.

Decisions about whether a child is eligible for ESY services should be made based on data that is collected throughout the school year. IEP teams that meet annually in the fall, for example, should defer decisions regarding ESY until later in the school year when sufficient data has been generated. It is a shared right of both teachers and parents to defer this decision until later in the school year as necessary.

Here are a few things to keep in mind regarding ESY services:

- Determination of the type and amount of ESY services is made on an individual basis
- ESY services are for maintenance of regular school year goals and objectives as well as critical learning skills
- Least restrictive environment during ESY may not be the same as during the regular school year
- Related services (speech, occupational, physical therapy) must also be considered
- Transportation must be considered as part of ESY services
- Modifications and accommodations are required as during the regular school year

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